

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY  
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS**

301 State House  
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**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**LS 7624**

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 1761

**NOTE PREPARED:** Jan 18, 2003

**BILL AMENDED:**

**SUBJECT:** Child abuse reporting.

**FIRST AUTHOR:** Rep. Avery

**FIRST SPONSOR:**

**BILL STATUS:** As Introduced

**FUNDS AFFECTED:** X

**GENERAL  
DEDICATED  
FEDERAL**

X

**IMPACT:** State & Local

**Summary of Legislation:** This bill provides that child protective services (CPS) shall conduct in-home visits at least once every 30 days to ensure compliance with a: (1) voluntary services referral agreement; or (2) program of informal adjustment. The bill provides that a CPS report compiled following an investigation of child abuse or neglect may conclude that abuse or neglect is indicated. (Current law allows only substantiated and unsubstantiated findings.)

The bill provides that a child is a Child in Need of Services if the child's physical or mental condition is impaired or endangered. (Current law provides that a child is a child in need of services if the child's physical or mental condition is seriously impaired or seriously endangered.)

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2003.

**Explanation of State Expenditures:** This bill has two separate provisions: (1) requires CPS to conduct in-home visits at least once every 30 days for voluntary services referral agreements and a program of informal adjustment; and (2) provides that a child is a Child in Need of Services (CHINS) if the child's physical or mental condition is impaired or endangered.

(1) This provision will not have a fiscal impact. Current FSSA policies require a Family Case Manager visit voluntary service referral agreement and informal adjustment participants at least once each month at their residence. Thus, there would not be any increase in workload.

(2) This provision may increase the total number of CHINS cases. Under current practice an order of the court decides whether a child is a CHINS. It is unclear as to whether a change from "child's physical or mental condition is seriously impaired or seriously endangered" to "impaired or endangered" will increase total caseload. If this change increases the number of CHINS cases, state expenditures will increase. FSSA estimates that the current cost of a CHINS case is approximately \$3,600 per child. Total cost is dependent upon the number of children referred for a CHINS determination.

Out-of-home placements and services to children in need of services are funded by the local county Family and Children's Fund. Certain out-of-home placements may be matched with Federal IV-E funds and CHINS are eligible for Medicaid services. Child Welfare Caseworkers and other staff of the local Offices of Family and Children are state employees. Additions to the number of children being supervised by the County Offices of Family and Children may result in the need for additional staff.

*Background:* The estimate of the \$3,600 annual cost of CHINS for CY 2001 includes the population of children for whom investigations were completed as well as those who are CHINS. This overstates the costs for investigations and understates the costs for children in out-of-home placements. However, this is the most accurate number available from current data. For CY 2001 total child welfare expenditures were \$273 M for 76,000 children.

**Explanation of State Revenues:**

**Explanation of Local Expenditures:** *County Office of Family and Children, Court with Juvenile Jurisdiction, and County Prosecutor:* The caseloads of the county Office of Family and Children, court with juvenile jurisdiction, and county prosecutor may increase. This increase in caseload and associated costs is unknown and contingent upon judicial action. FSSA estimates the average cost of providing services for a child in need of services (CHINS) for CY 2001 to be approximately \$3,600 per year. The cost for a child found to be a CHINS under this bill may be lower than this estimate. Out-of-home placements and services to children in need of services are primarily funded by the local county Family and Children's Fund. Certain out-of-home placements may be matched with Federal IV-E funds, and CHINS are eligible for Medicaid services.

**Explanation of Local Revenues:**

**State Agencies Affected:** FSSA

**Local Agencies Affected:** County Offices of Family and Children, County Prosecuting Attorneys, and Courts with Juvenile Jurisdiction.

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